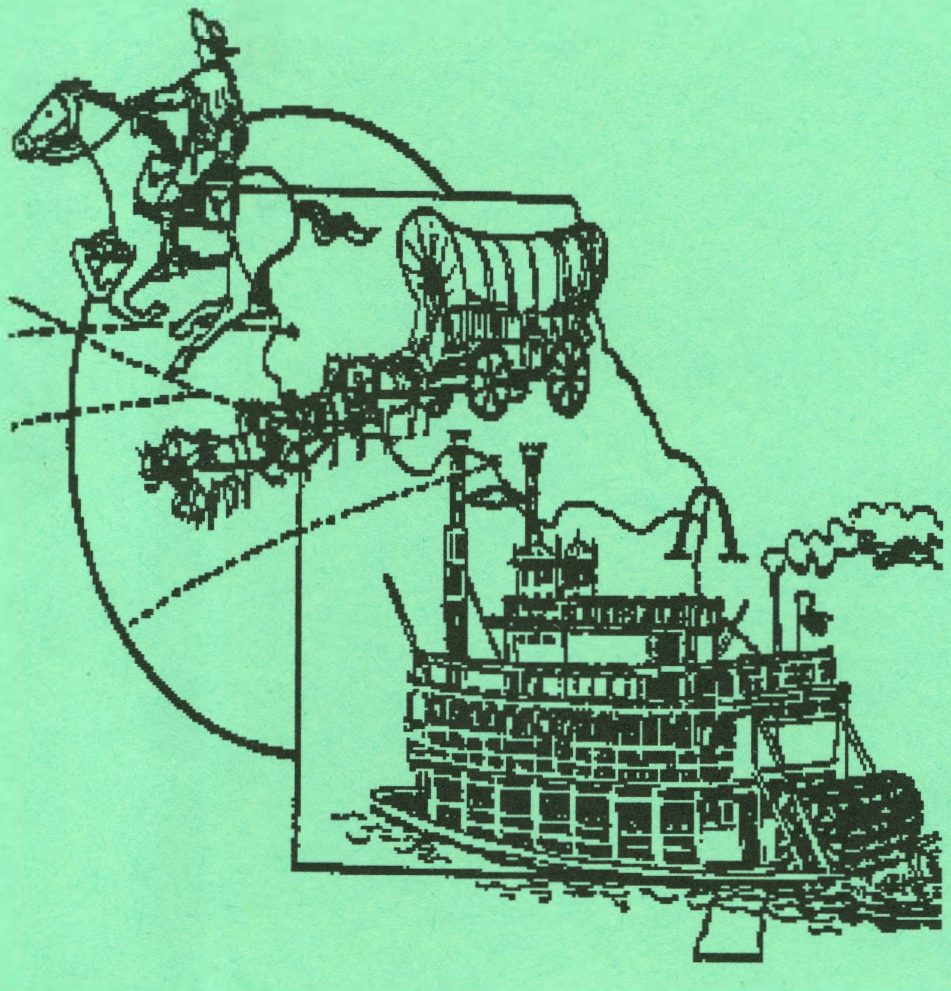

Toward The Setting Sun

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TOWARD THE SETTING SUN

The Historical Journal of the Missouri Conference

The United Methodist Church

Volume 14, Number 1 *Fall, 2015*

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FROM THE EDITOR

This is an unusual issue the journal, because I found in my possession some incredible historical documents. Here's how it happened.

Some time ago, Steve and Nancy Campbell approached me about some historical materials they had inherited from his father. They wanted to find a good home for them, and was I interested? Of course, I was interested and took the materials gladly. It turned out there were five issues of a publication called *The American Illustrated Methodist Magazine* from the year 1899. They were in amazingly good shape for something 116 years old! They were published in St. Louis by the Methodist Magazine Publishing Company. The subscription price for this monthly magazine was $1 a year, or ten cents a copy. And these were not fliers – they were substantial magazines that included pictures with the articles. I thumbed through them and thought it would be fun to reproduce two of the articles for this issue of *Toward the Setting Sun.*

I found two "biographical" articles about Methodist bishops, one from the South Church and one from the North. The Southern bishop was Enoch Mather Marvin, the first Missouri pastor of either branch to be elected bishop. The Northern bishop was Matthew Simpson, who had several indirect ties to Missouri. He also was an officiant at the burial of Abraham Lincoln. Those are the articles reproduced in this issue.

Please notice the differences in writing styles and grammar usage in these articles from what we practice today. Note also that neither of the writers was concerned about attributing quotations to their sources. They several times name the person quoted, but not the source. All material in quotation marks is quoted from somewhere, but we aren't told where. I say all that because I have tried, in the years I've been editing this journal, to be scholarly about the use of sources.

I also reproduced the articles just as they appeared in the magazines (minus the pictures). So, if anything about style or grammar seems strange to you, that's why. My sense was that the differences from their time to ours was, in itself, a valuable look at part of our history.

This fall is also important for our time, as well. It marks the end of World War II, and the beginning of the Cold War (in many ways). We are also reminded of Lee's surrender at Appomattox and the end of the American Civil War. (The actual date was last spring, but the consequences of that war are still reverberating in the news headlines today.) We are also in the middle of the commemoration of World War I, though the United States had not yet officially entered the war.

Next year marks the bi-centennial of the founding of the Missouri Conference of the Methodist Church, and the spring issue of *Toward the Setting Sun* will be a special issue commemorating that historical milestone.

As always, we continue to look for suggestions for articles for the magazine, and for persons who would like to write for us. Contact me at jogooch@aol.com for suggestions and for volunteering to write.

John O. Gooch, Ph.D.

ENOCH MATHER MARVIN

Forsythe Wilson

Benjamin Jowett, the Master of Balliol, once remarked that the moral teaching of the future would be largely biographical. Without doubt, truth is most impressive when set in human life, looking through human eyes, and working with human heart and brain and hands. Through "Plutarch's Lives" we know the best thought and aspiration of the ancient world. Carlyle has taught us to appreciate the worth of personality in the great movements of history. It is in the Bible, however, that the power of a life is most effective and impressive. "The spiritual man is the candle of the Lord," the medium of the highest revelation. In a limited sense it may be said of Abraham, of Moses, of David, and of the long list of biblical worthies, as it was of the Son of Man, "the life was the light of men."

The succession of noble and luminous lives has never failed in the world. Julius Charles Hare once observed, in preaching before the University of Cambridge, that the eleventh chapter of Hebrews is an unfinished chapter and runs parallel with the growing centuries. He chronicles in words of surpassing eloquence some of the mighty achievements, by faith, of Polycarp, Chrystostom, Athanasius, Wickliff, Luther, Wesley, and of a great cloud of witnesses. It is lawful to continue that same eleventh chapter of Hebrews, with its record of heroic and triumphant faith, through the history of Asbury, McKendree, and a long line of itinerant pioneer preachers "who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens." In this illustrious line of wonder-working faith, of heroic service, of sacrifice and achievement an honorable place must be given to the name of Enoch Mather Marvin.

When one visits the log cabin built by General Grant, still standing in Missouri, and considers that the man who hewed those logs and laid them in order was afterward called to fill one of the most exalted stations among men, and went around the planet as the guest of kings, with every palace door open to him, one is impressed with the striking contrasts which may appear even in a simple human life. Much the same impression is made by a visit to "The Five Cedars," the birthplace and early home of

Bishop Marvin. The child born there in the heart of the wilderness, on June 12, 1823, amid the narrowest primitive conditions and limitations, was destined to be "a ruler in Israel," and to encircle the globe in the interest of Christian missions, as St. Paul once traveled the great Mediterranean circuit.

The amount, variety, and quality of Marvin's work is simply amazing. He began as a pioneer preacher, with the most slender equipment; and yet, before many years had passed, his vigor of intellect, breadth of knowledge, eloquence, statesmanship and aggressiveness proved him a true leader of men. He seemed to rise to every new duty and responsibility of his life as though he had been for a long time in special preparation for just that thing.

Soil and climate are helpful to the oak, but do not altogether account for it; the greatest potentiality of the tree is hidden away in the acorn itself. Environment, opportunity, endowment are elements in the development of a great character, but the greatest of these is endowment, as we see in the careers of Dante, Shakespeare, Cromwell, Luther, Washington, and Lincoln. An important question concerning any child will always be "What does he bring with him into the world?" One's inheritance, while not fate, is surely one of the most potent of determining factors.

Enoch Mather Marvin was "born well" the first time. He was descended on both sides from the Pilgrim Fathers of New England, who "carried empires in their brains." Distinguished names shine out all down the ancestral lin. Of one of his ancestors the story is told, that when serving as a minute man, having made up his mind that Betty Lee would suit him for a wife, he rode up to the front of the house were Betty lived and, without dismounting, called her to the door and announced with an infallible air that might become the Pope, that the Lord had sent him there to marry her. Betty, with much hesitation, answered as devoutly and promptly as Rebecca in Laban's tent, "The will of the Lord be done."

On his mother's side he was a descendant of Richard Mather, of whom came, also, Increase and Cotton Mather, and of whom this epitaph was written:

Under this Stone lives Richard Mather

Who had a Son greater than his Father

And eke a Grandson greater than either.

It has been happily said that the first six years of life is man's "creation week," when he is most susceptible to moulding and directing influences. As Marvin himself writes, "No hands can caress a child like a mothers; no eye can beam upon it like hers; no voice can baptize its heart with such a wealth of tenderness." George Stephenson was once asked to name the mightiest force in nature. He did not name steam, electricity or gravitation, but said: "The mightiest force is nature is the power of a woman's eye; one glance of it will send a man to the end of the world, and the memory of it will bring him back."

But the light of a mother's eye – who can measure that? Bishop James O. Andrew used to recall, as the most potent force of his life, the face and words of his mother as she said, "James, I would rather see you a faithful preacher of the gospel than emperor of the world," and in telling it he exclaimed: "And, oh, how she looked when she said it."

In a similar manner Bishop Marvin carried in his heart one of the earliest and most distinct recollections of his mother. Once, holding him in her lap she looked down into his eyes as she sang her favorite hymn: "Alas, and did my Savior bleed?" When she came to the last stanza: "But drops of grief can ne'er repay the debt of love I owe: Here, Lord, I give myself away, 'tis all that I can do," tears dropped from her eyes upon the face of the child in her lap. Those tears were the Bishop's first consecration, like Hannah's vow for Samuel in the temple.

It was in a class-meeting at the home of William McConnell that young Marvin was first spiritually awakened. As he knelt at a chair in that meeting he vowed, that, come what might, he would continue to seek the Lord until he found Him. For thirty-one months he was faithful to that vow – an earnest and persistent seeker of pardon. In December of 1840 that plain log-house of William McConnell became a Bethel-like house of grace and privilege to him. Conversion was to Marvin the great event of the Christian life. He believed, with Bishop Pierce, that "spiritual regeneration is the noblest genealogy; the oldest, the largest, the best." He was accustomed to say of this radical

change: "Every birth is the beginning of new life. The restoration of the soul unto God is nothing short of this. There is new life. It is the divine life – the life of God in the soul." He was fond of pointing out the change made in Jewish chronology by the Feast of the Passover: "This shall be for you the beginning of months." It gave a new date to time, as if to teach men that they begin to live when they live in Christ and for Christ.

The father of young Marvin designed him for secular life, presumably the law, but God's purpose was to make him a minister and a witness. Years afterward, in writing of a call to the ministry, he doubtless gave his own heart history: "Let him who feels impelled toward the ministry live near to God and await the signal. Let him, by constant, earnest prayer, put himself in God's hand, to be guided whithersoever He will. Let pride and self- will be cast out. If he be really a chosen vessel, God will in due time 'set his feet in the way of his steps'."

Thus, in his eighteenth year, the young itinerant went forth from his father's house, like Abraham of old, "not knowing whither he went." As he himself describes it, he went out "unto the wilderness, with no railroad, nor telegraph wire, nor scarcely an old-fashioned stage line to disenchant the scene." He was out "swimming rivers on horseback, wandering of tempestuous nights in morasses, with the howl of the wolf and the scream of the panther making chorus in the song of the wind and the thunder, and best, it may be, by savage Indians."

In Warren County, Missouri, Daniel Boone ended his long pioneer pilgrimage in the wilderness. From that same wilderness young Marvin set out to travel the circuit of the great round world, having, like the angel in the Apocalypse "the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." His first mission was to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" – to the families scattered abroad over a new country. Many were the interesting incidents of early circuit life – some of them heroic, some pathetic, and some amusing. Of the latter, one may be given:

One night he lodged at a cabin where morning ablutions were only occasional. He asked for a basin and water to wash. The host, with some surprise, brought a bucket of water, and a gourd with which he poured water on the visitor's hands, asking in

wonder: "Say, Mister, do you wash every morning? And do you comb your hair every day, too?" On receiving an affirmative answer, the native exclaimed: "Mister, what a sight of trouble you must be to yourself!"

Marvin's first appearance in the pulpit was unique and his manner somewhat startling. One who heard his first sermon writes as follows:

"His appearance was enough to fix attention. He wore his hair long and was clad in a suit of blue jeans, much faded, and the pantaloons were scant in length. His tall, spare figure, pale and thin visage, awkward and vehement gesticulation, loud, rapid and impetuous enunciation, joined with his intense earnestness and zeal, created a genuine sensation. It was as if Elijah, the Tishbite, had suddenly appeared.

His uncouth appearance attracted attention everywhere, though he himself was utterly unconscious of it. When one asked of Caples at Conference, pointing to Marvin who stood near them, "an angular, loose-built form with long, tangled hair early listening to al that went on: Who in the world is that?" "Enoch the seventh from Adam," was the quick response.

In fact, Marvin, like many men of marked originality, was not of prepossessing appear-ance. His nose was a prominent feature, and was set like John Calvin's; his form was tall, angular, loose-jointed, and about as regular in outline as the Atlantic Coast line, or as the form of Abraham Lincoln. Like Lincoln, also, his face was somewhat mountainous, hiding cavernous depths of thought and feeling. One could easily be mistaken in such a man; and his vigor and originality of thought, and his overwhelming eloquence came as a great surprise to his hearers. Once he rebuked in an effective and amusing way one who had sorely wounded by marked discourtesy. By request he assisted the presiding elder at a quarterly meeting in a neighboring circuit. The hostess who entertained them treated the presiding elder with the most conspicuous consideration and kindness. Her coolness, indifference, and even neglect of the homely, poorly-clad young preacher was equally conspicuous. It chanced, however, that Marvin preached, before the meeting closed, with wonderful effect. After the sermon the woman who had treated him so shabbily came running up to him, and exclaimed loudly: "Oh,

Brother Marvin, when are you coming to see us again?" "Never, Madam," was the reply, "unless the judgment sits near here."

Marvin's extraordinary gifts soon carried him to the front rank of ministerial standing and service. In a few years we find him filling the leading pulpits of St. Louis, and not only filling, but expanding and exalting them. Henceforth that city became the center of his life and influence. It is hardly possible to speak too highly of the ministry of Bishop Marvin in St. Louis. It was very much like the ministry of Phillip Brooks in Boston – a center of light, of leadership, and of inspiration to the entire city. He attracted to his ministrations many of the most cultivated minds of the city, and was in quick touch will all the progressive movements of the community and with all the connectional and educational interests of his own denomination. He possessed the wonderful ability of doing many things in rapid success, and of doing them well. His genius, like the cherubim of Ezekiel's vision, fronted many ways. He swiftly grasped a new subject or situation in general scope and in detail. He was capable of quick adjustment, turning at once the full tide of his being in a new direction. One incident will reveal his devotion, courage, and tact in pastoral work.

Once, visiting a man distinguished for learning, and a pronounced atheist, he was received with scant civility. His conversation and charming manner soon won a hearing and personal interest. As they were about to separate the minister said:

"I am accustomed to pray with those I visit."

"Very well, said the gentleman; "pray."

"But, before I pray, let us settle to whom we pray."

"I pray," said the atheist, "to the principle of nature."

"Then," said the minister, "I cannot pray; I do not know how to pray to a principle. I can guide my life by a principle, but I can only pray to a person."

"Pray as you wish," said the astonished atheist.

Pray he did and that prayer was the beginning of new life to that man.

During the war Marvin was appointed by Bishop Paine superintendent of chaplains in the western department of the Confederate Army. "The unanimous testimony of all who were associated with him during all the sad scenes of those dark and trying days is that, whether in the long and weary march, in the tentless bivouac, through swamps or over mountains, in summer and in winter, by the side of the sick and dying soldier, or preaching the word of life where the flickering lights gleam from the camp-fires in the forest, or on the wide prairies in the darkness relieved only by the shining stars, he was ever the same pure and peaceful spirit, striving earnestly to win souls to Christ." It is said that during a lull in the fearful cannonading at Gettysburg a bird in the famous peach orchard poured forth its joyous song. So Chaplain Marvin during the enforced leisure of camp life, composed one of his noblest books, "The Work of Christ." Like John in Patmos, amid the desolations of war, his heart clung to his supreme theme. In 1866 he was elected a bishop by the General Conference of his church, meeting that year at New Orleans. He was not a member of that Conference, and was not aware of his election until he arrived in New Orleans, several days afterwards. It came to him as a great surprise and as a new call to service and sacrifice. In episcopal labors he rivaled Asbury and McKendree. He rallied the church after the havoc and loss of the civil war. In many places, like a born general, he organized defeat into victory. In wise, forelooking statesmanship he was the Hildebrand of the episcopacy. On Conference Sundays he preached as one inspired. Ministers caught his spirit of consecration and went forth to toil and sacrifice with courage and enthusiasm. He traveled throughout the connection continuously, spending at one time fifteen months on the Pacific Coast. In fact, during his episcopacy he was little more than a visitor at home. It happened once that a person was speaking in a company in high praise of a sermon heard from Bishop Marvin. Remembering that a young lady present bore the name of Marvin, he asked her if she knew the Bishop. "He is my father," the young lady replied, "but I don't know him very well." When the Bishop lay dead at his home in St. Louis, Mrs. Marvin said to a friend, with deep emotion, "God has been good to me; he died at home."

In 1876 Bishop Marvin was appointed by his episcopal colleagues to visit the missions of the Church in China. The summer of that year was spent in preparation. Among other things he prepared a volume of sermons for the press. He seemed to

anticipate that his work was nearing an end, as appears from the closing words of the preface: "And now that the day is far spent and the night is at hand, I feel that I cannot afford to be idle; so I have put in the odd hours in preparing this book. Son of God, I commit it to Thee."

On his episcopal tour, he completed the circuit of the globe with eyes and mind and heart open to all things that concern the Kingdom. Rev. E.R. Hendrix, now Bishop Hendrix, was his companion on this great journey and has made a charming record of it. Speaking of the approach to Palestine, Bishop Hendrix observes:

"I can see him now on the deck of our steamer as, on the morning of Easter Sabbath, we stood gazing upon the outline of the Promised Land. With eager eyes he looked upon Mount Carmel and the coast of Caesarea, the town of Joppa, and the country of the Philistines, all stretched out in a single panorama, while the Judean Hills skirted the horizon and shut out the Holy City. This vision, which until a few months before he never dreamed on enjoying, was a banquet to his spirit."

Bishop Marvin speaks impressively of his last view of the Sea of Galilee, and, in so speaking, reveals his rare power of assimilation: "As I sat there on horseback, gazing upon it for the last time, the whole scene entered too deeply into my heart to be forgotten. I am sure it will never be forgotten. I turned my horse's head and left it – or, rather, in a deeper sense, I carried it away, a rich possession of the soul forever."

His letters and addresses proved a rich source of inspiration and wisdom and zeal ot the Church in missionary enterprise. His watch-cry still echoes in the world: "China conquered, the world will be at the feet of Jesus; China will turn to the Lord: I feel it: I almost see it!"

The home life of Bishop Marvin was ideal. An extract from a letter to a son absent in college, placed in contrast with Chesterfield's letters to his son, will show the Christian aim and outlook:

"A life consecrated to God can never be a failure. Whatever may be the result of mere business and professional ventures, such a life attains to the highest end of existence. Of course, I shall be rejoiced if you do well in your profession; and, if your life

and health be spared, I doubt not you will. But, even if worse should come to worst, in regard to the affairs of this life, I shall certainly not consider that a calamity. Nothing is a calamity except the ruin of the soul. Preserve honor and truth. Keep your promise with God. Seek first the Kingdom of God. I dread somewhat the effect of an undue anxiety for mere professional success, and the *eclat* that it secures. I would have you, first of all things, a Christian, deeply, fully consecrated to God. All else shall be added as God Himself shall see the need, 'for your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things'."

Bishop Marvin died at his home in St. Louis, November 26, 1877, amid a host of sorrowing friends, and was laid to rest in Bellefontaine Cemetery. Dr. Thomas M. Finney, his life-long friend, closes his excellent "Life of Marvin" in this happy manner: " In a diary entry, the second to the last, written a few days before his death, Lord Macaulay wrote of his end: 'Impatient to get to my little, narrow crib, like a weary factory child.' The Bishop, however, had a more glorious outlook on the last month of life. On a visit to his brother's grave, at his last sacramental board, with the emblems of redemption in his hands, in holy rapture, eyes uplifted and arms stretched forth, this the utterance of Bishop Marvin:

" 'O, the mansions! The mansions! They appear in sight!'"

BISHOP MATTHEW SIMPSON

The Emerald Isle has made, directly and indirectly, many noble contributions to Methodism. Conspicuous among them have been Adam Clark, the Fermanagh lad who opened the Scriptures to the Methodist Israel; Charles Elliott, the Donegal schoolmaster who became a Gamaliel in the western wilderness; John McClintock, the princely scholar and preacher; James Mills Thoburn, the Apostle of India, and the subject of this sketch, Matthew Simpson, the eloquent bishop around whose lips the bees might have gathered as they are said to have swarmed about the lips of the infant Ambrose.

Paul wrote to Timothy "of the unfeigned faith which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois." The words might have been applied, with singular aptness, to the young Matthew. His grandmother Simpson educated her family very strictly in the faith of the Irish Presbyterian Church; but shortly after being left a widow she happened to hear John Wesley preach, on one of his visits to Ireland. Her heart was touched. She began to attend class and finally joined the Methodist society. From that time forward her children attended Methodist meetings, and, at an early age, all of them united with the Methodist Church. "Often," writes the bishop, "when a boy, did I listen, in the long winter evenings, to her reminiscences of Irish life, and to stories of fairy, elf, and ghost the common traditions of the north of Ireland, until I found my hair standing on end, and was almost afraid to leave the little circle in which I sat enchanted. She was happy at ninety with her old-fashioned spinning-wheel and her hymn-book, singing the hymns she loved, and was a devout attendant at church as long as she was able to visit it."

Of the bishop's mother it would be difficult to speak in too high praise. No man ever owed more to a mother's care and devotion then did Matthew Simpson. "Heavens! What women these Christians have!" exclaimed Libanius the Sophist, when he found his onslaught against Christianity thwarted and defeated by the fidelity and firmness of the Christian women of Antioch. The unwavering faith and courageous devotion of Christian womanhood has been one of the glories of the Church of Christ and one of the mightiest forces of this moving world. What Eunice was to Timothy, what Monica was to Augustine, what Arethusa was to Chrysostom, what Susannah was to John Wesley, that Sarah Tingley Simpson was to her child Matthew. Born in New Jersey, reared in

eastern Ohio, she early united with the Church, and even in her youth the strength and earnestness of her Christian character were clearly recognized.

James Simpson and Sarah Tingley, having married in 1806, established their home in Cadiz, Ohio. Mr. Simpson was a man of great personal energy and business tact. He engaged, with his brother Matthew, in the manufacture of weaver's reeds, and was, for several years, quite prosperous in the business until his health began to fail. Three children were born to the couple, two daughters and one son, Matthew, the youngest child, who was born June 21, 1811. In some respects Matthew was like Jabez, a child of sorrow. At the time of his birth his father was in feeble health, with but slender prospects of recovery. From his very birth the child was conse-crated to God. Like Samuel, Matthew was lent unto the Lord, as long as he should live. Both father and mother prayed that he might be made a minister. God saw fit to call him to that service. The prayer was answered, and the child of such solicitude and consecration grew up to be, for more than a generation, one of the great leaders of the modern church.

Bishop Asbury, when passing westward in 1811 was a guest in the Simpson home. Father Boehm, his traveling companion, records the fact of the child's baptism at that time. The group at the baptismal service was most interesting and significant. The mother and the babe were of American birth, but the father was from Ireland, the itinerant Methodist bishop was from England, while the minister who assisted came from Germany. Thus the old races meet in a new country; thus the old faith adapts itself to meet new times and new conditions. The mantle of the pioneer bishop was, in due time, to fall upon the shoulders of the infant he took into his arms. Matthew was to take the flaming torch of the new evangelism which Francis had received from John, and, like a swift runner, was to carry it to the uttermost sea.

It was in Cadiz that Matthew Simpson grew up to manhood, under the care of his mother and his paternal uncle Matthew, after whom he was named, and who was also a member of the household. Since a man's environment counts for so much in the thought of the time, it is worth our while to glance at that of Bishop Simpson. His native state, Ohio, has shown herself to be the nourishing mother of many sons who have distinguished themselves as generals, statesmen, bishops, and presidents. Without doubt the larger portion of the early population of the state was of New England origin.

Certainly the ruling ideas of the young commonwealth were those of New England. The portion of the state, however, in which Simpson was born might have been fitly called New Ulster, so many of the early settlers having emigrated from the northern counties of Ireland. Their influence throughout eastern Ohio is to this day at once potent and wholesome. Not many years since, a young pastor beginning his ministry in that part of the country was so impressed with the number of kindly and pious Ulster folks to be found there that he named the circuit he traveled Tyrone, and it was so carried on the Conference roll until an Englishman appeared upon the scene who changed the ancient landmark. Into such a God-fearing, toiling, world-subduing community was Matthew Simpson born. Religion was the principal concern of life, the Bible the great textbook, and theological discussion the dominant interest. Writing of those days, one observes: "The traveler on horseback might often stop on a Saturday night at a log school-house, and find the rustic combatants battling with each other on 'the five points,' on the divinity of Christ, or on baptism, with all the energy of Luther and Eck at Leipsic."

The child Matthew was fortunate in the character and interest of his relative. After his father's death, which occurred when Matthew was about one year old, his paternal uncle, Matthew Simpson, after whom he was named, assumed special responsibility in his training and education. Uncle Matthew taught a select school in Cadiz for some years, and was a man noted for his integrity, sagacity and earnest religious character. He exerted a commanding influence in the community, and was for some years a member of the state legislature. Of his service there Professor Tingley makes this record: "In all difficult cases before the house, when his opinion was called for, not matter how complicated the question, he would proceed to unravel the knotty points, illuminate the obscure ones, clear away the fallacies, and in a manner entirely satisfactory to all parties give sentence. This generally closed the debate." Perhaps next to his mother, the strongest influence that touched the bishop's life was that of his uncle Matthew. From his childhood he found in his uncle a father, a teacher, a brother and a friend, and the attachment between the two remained singularly close and beautiful. In Doctor Crook's interesting life of Bishop Simpson, published by Harper Brothers, the letters given at length are a valuable feature; and none are more interesting than those which passed between uncle and nephew. It is thus that the young Matthew writes to the elder:

"Surely, you cannot think I could forget, while this heart beats or this mind acts, one who has been so long the object of my warmest regard, one who raised the tender mind, who gave me what little intellectual culture I may possess, and to whose precepts and example, under the blessing of Providence, I am indebted for those traits of character which have placed me where I am. Can I forget that uncle who nursed me frequently in his arms, sang to me in gleeful mood, turned my infant mind to science, supplied me with books, introduced me to public life, filled my mind with moral and religious sentiments, and followed me from home with prayers and his fondest wishes, and to use his own expression, felt that 'his life was bound up in the lad's life'? No, never, 'while life or thought or being last or immortality endures.'"

The elder Matthew thus writes to the younger: "The promise is, 'if thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light;' so, if you lay down your own will and study only the will of your Lord, as He has heretofore directed you, so He will now. Do not reach forward for preferment; let God choose. Think only of your work. Everything that concerns your life, health and comfort more strongly affects your mother than you might imagine from the fortitude with which she parted from you. However, if her prayers and mine can do you any good, I think we never forget you, probably, not one hour in the day. Remember you are the child of Providence."

According to all reports, young Matthew was a precocious child. At the age of three he was able to read. When but eight years of age he took up the study of German, in which he became quite proficient. A few years afterward he entered upon the study of Latin and Greek, and made rapid progress in these languages. While quite a boy a book embracing the elements of surveying, geometry and trigonometry was placed in his hands. In a short time he had fairly well mastered the work, largely through his own unaided efforts. Noticing his insatiable thirst for knowledge and his remarkable facility in acquiring it, friends determined to give the young student, if possible, the benefit of a college training. In 1828, when Matthew was in his eighteenth year, Dr. Charles Elliott, who was at this time professor in Madison College, at Uniontown, Pennsylvania, a small institution then under the control of the Pittsburg Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, visited Cadiz and became interested in young Simpson. He urged him to attend the college and offered to assist him in various ways. As a result we find the

young man passing from the direct tuition of his uncle to the sympathetic care and training of one of the great scholars, teachers and ecclesiastical leaders of the time. Marcus Aurelius, "the consummate flower of Stoicism," records his obligation to various teachers in the following manner: "From my grandfather Varus I learned good morals and the government of my temper; from my mother, piety and beneficence and abstinence, not only from evil deeds, but even from evil thoughts; from Apollonius I learned freedom of will and undeviating steadiness of purpose; from Diognetes I learned to endure freedom of speech, and through him gained an acquaintance with philosophy." A similar grateful remembrance Bishop Simpson might have written of his mother, his uncle Matthew, and of Dr. Charles Elliott. Of the latter, Doctor Crooks justly remarks: "Charles Elliott deserves a fuller record than he has had, as one of the pioneers of Methodist education. Born in County Donegal, Ireland, he was one of the innumerable company of Irish schoolmasters who have through their schools been the leaders of American culture, and have formed much that is best in American character. Doctor Elliott will remain in early American history as a bright example of the pure and simple scholar, who loved learning for its own sake, and who never ceased, while life lasted, from its eager acquisition." It was fortunate for Bishop Simpson that he came so early under the influence of so competent and so consecrated and instructor. And singularly enough, Doctor Elliott touched the young man's life at opportune moments. He urged him to enter college, appointed him an assistant teacher, brought about his entrance to the Pittsburg Conference, recommended him to the presidency of Indiana Asbury University, and delivered into his hands the editorial direction of *The Western Christian Advocate.*

Concerning life in Madison College, the young student has left an interesting record; for, after the fashion of those days, he kept a diary. "About the first of November," he writes, "I was ready to start for college. Uniontown was over ninety miles from Cadiz. There was no stage road through our town, nor was there any public conveyance, and my means were so narrow that I judged it best to make the journey on foot. So, tying up the clothes I needed, and a few books in a little bundle which I carried, I set out for college with eleven dollars and twenty-five cents in my pocket. I made the whole journey on foot, traveling in the most economical way, and arrived at Uniontown on the afternoon of the third day." His expense account for the journey is faithfully

given. "Left Cadiz," he writes, "with $11.25; the balance in hand, after buying one or two books, and paying a trifle on account for tuition, is $3.50." "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." Speaking of Joseph in Egypt, the Psalmist says – to quote the Revised Version of the Scriptures – that *his soul entered into the iron.* Perhaps it is necessary, in the preparation for great leadership, that the soul of a man should in some form "enter into the iron". An environment that is all gold is apt to arrest one's higher development. In mastering great difficulties one acquires self-reliance, courage, and the secret of victory. Hannibal crossing the Alps and facing the destiny of Rome scarcely exhibits greater determination or braver endurance than young Matthew entering Madison College with three dollars and a half in his pocket and with an iron resolution in his soul. A glance at the young student's diary for this period shows that college life was no holiday affair. "December 1st: Rose at half-past four; recited Latin Prosody, also twenty-fourth proposition, third book of Euclid; read Cicero and Greek Testament; continued Livy." "December 5th: Rose at half-past three; recited from fifteenth to thirtieth proposition, sixth book of Euclid." "December 25th: this day being Christmas, there was no school. Attended prayer-meeting before daylight; at eleven heard Mr. Bascom preach. Received the appointment of tutor in Madison College."

He was unable to remain at Madison longer than a few months. Feeling that the expense might be too heavy a burden upon his mother and uncle, he turned his face homeward, walking over the same road by which he came. For some time he was assistant teacher in the select school of his uncle at Cadiz. In 1830 he entered upon the study of medicine, a step which was taken from two considerations. In the first place, he had a natural inclination in that direction, growing out of his fondness for scientific study; and in the second place, he had a deep conviction, strengthened by the judgment of friends, that he would never make a public speaker. For three years, young Simpson was an earnest and thorough student of medicine, and was in 1833 admitted to practice. He entered upon his professional labors with great interest, and with most favorable prospects. In the meantime Providence was shaping events in another direction. Under the gracious influences of home life, and under the earnest preaching of faithful ministers, the conversion of Matthew Simpson was a simple process, like that of Lydia, at Philippi, an opening of the heart to divine truth and love, as quiet and beautiful as the coming of the dawn. He no sooner became consciously alive in Christ than he displayed

remarkable activity in every form of Christian service, influencing many of his friends to begin the Christian life. He organized a Sunday-school in the church and secured for it an excellent library. Gradually he was drawn out to take a more active part in public service, and, before he was aware of it, the church began to recognize in his "gifts and graces" the evidence of a divine call to ministry. Accordingly, the Rev. James Mills, a devoted minister of Christ, and a man from Donegal, brought the name of Dr. Matthew Simpson before the class for recommendation to preach. The vote of recommendation was readily given, and the license duly granted. On the following Sunday, April 7, 1833, Simpson preached his first sermon at New Athens, from the text "Walk while ye have the light" (John xii. 35). In his "Yale Lectures on Preaching" the bishop gives this interesting account of his mental conflicts over the subject of the ministry: "The conviction," he says, "grew upon me that I must preach. I tried to put the thought away, because I feared I never could succeed. Two special difficulties were in my way: First, I had no gift of speech. My voice was poor. My associates believed, and I firmly believed, I could never make a speaker. My second difficulty was that my mother was a widow: I was her only son, and the only child remaining at home. It seemed impossible to leave her. I feared it might almost break her heart to propose it. But as I saw the church would probably call me, and as I had promised God to follow his openings, I one day, with great embarrassment, introduced the subject to my mother. After I had told her my mental struggles, and what I believed God required, I paused. I shall never forget how she turned to me with a smile on her countenance, and her eyes suffused with tears, as she said: 'My son, I have been looking for this hour ever since you were born.' She then told me how she and my dying father had consecrated me to God. And yet that mother had never dropped a word or intimation in my hearing that she desired me to be a preacher. She believed so fully in a divine call that she thought it wrong to bias the youthful mind with even a suggestion. That conversation settled my mind."

Though recommended by the Quarterly Conference for admission to the Annual Conference, the young physician was not fully resolved to enter at once upon the work of a traveling preacher. He accordingly wrote to his Presiding Elder, the Rev. Wesley Browning, to withhold his recommendation. But Mr. Browning, after consulting with Doctor Elliott and other ministers familiar with the circumstances, took the responsibility of presenting the recommendation, and Matthew Simpson was received

on trial in the Pittsburg Conference at Meadville, Pennsylvania, in July 1833, and was appointed with two other ministers to the circuit upon which he lived. During this first year in the ministry he passed through a peculiar experience which is worth recording. At a dedication in St. Clairsville the Rev. John Waterman preached several sermons of such beauty and power that the young minister was quite discouraged with his own efforts, and thought seriously about giving up the work. Mentioning the matter to a wise and devout man, Mr. Thoburn, father of Bishop Thoburn, he was dissuaded from such a step. A short time afterward a visiting minister, older in the Conference than himself, preached so poorly that he resolved to continue in the pulpit until it should be supplied with better men. Evidently the Church was favorable impressed with his ministry, for we find him assigned for the next two years to the city of Pittsburg, the most important charge in the Conference. During the first year he was associated with the Rev. Thomas Hudson and the Rev. William Hunter. During the second year he was stationed at Liberty Street Church. His Pittsburg pastorate was a time of varied experience, of trial and of growth. From the beginning his preaching attracted considerable attention, and his resources were severely taxed to meet the responsibilities of his position. Professor Hamnett, his intimate and life-long friend, writes of this period: "He was determined to be an extemporaneous speaker at all hazards, though he knew it would cost him many failures. He persisted in the effort, and some of his early sermons were very moderate. It was his practice to collect texts in a notebook and meditate upon them, and then use one of them quite suddenly for a sermon. He wrote but one discourse during all this period, and after delivering it he asked me if I noted anything peculiar in the delivery. I said no. He replied that it was written and memorized. The experiment satisfied him, for, so far as appears, it was never repeated.

In these days he profited greatly from the friendly criticisms of one of his parishioners,
Dr. Henry D. Sellers, the brother-in-law of Bishop Emory. Doctor Sellers is spoken of as a "man of strong character, clear, penetrating mind, and polished manners." It was the custom of young Simpson to call upon the doctor every Monday morning and discuss with him the delivery of the sermons of the preceding day. The result soon made itself apparent in the manner and effectiveness of his pulpit addresses. The appointment

of Simpson in the following year to the Liberty Street Church in Pittsburg, which made him, unwillingly, the rival of an experienced and highly esteemed minister, is a proof of his growing popularity as a preacher. A letter from the young pastor to his uncle shows how the appointments were made in Methodism more than sixty years ago.

Pittsburg, July 31, 1835

"Conference closed today and we have all received our appointments. Mine is in this city. C. Cook is in charge, if the station is not divided. The bishop advised to this, but if it is desirable to the people, he authorized them to divide, and in that case I have charge of Liberty Street. The state of feeling for the last few weeks has been very gloomy, and many apprehend a squall only inferior to the radical separation. The stationing for this city was very difficult; more so perhaps than it ever has been. At first I was sent to Williamsport; then the Liberty Street people petitioned and sent a delegation for me to the bishop. The presiding elders opposed, and succeeded in getting K. for Pittsburg. This morning the people got word of it, and just as the bishop was nearly ready to commence reading out the appointments, he received a letter which had the effect of placing me where I am."

Appointments are made in much the same way now. The adjustment of pastoral relations is difficult under any system. The truth is, as an old minister once observed, that "human nature is a queer institution and has never been fully abolished." Simpson was very much troubled over this appointment. In a letter to his uncle he frankly states the difficulties: "There was, first, my youth, never having had charge of any congregation, and now having the hardest in the Conference. Second, my want of experience, and consequently of variety. Third, my having spent one year with the charge. Fourth, I expected the opposition of the Smithfield Church, and also the jaundiced views and expressions of my brethren in the ministry. These reflections were far from agreeable." But the difficulties were soon adjusted and the two churches worked harmoniously together. The Smithfield Street Church had been a storm-center during the Methodist Protestant movement, and was apprehensive as to its own future in the face of a new division of its forces, but the old mother church soon settled back into her steady ways of growth and progress. To-day, after more than a century of organization, it remains one of the most vigorous and fruitful churches of the

denomination. During Bishop Simpson's pastorate in Pittsburg he was united in marriage to Miss Ellen H. Verner, and the union proved to be an ideal one in all respects.

In 1837 a new era began in the life of Simpson. In that year he was elected professor of natural science in Allegheny College, at Meadville, Pennsylvania, and vice-president of the faculty. Before that time Dr. Martin Ruter had approached him about accepting a professorship at Lagrange College, Alabama. But this was declined, because the four years' course in the ministry had not yet been completed. The position at Allegheny College, however, was accepted, as it did not involve a change of Conference relations. For two years he discharged the duties of his professorship and of his office in that institution with great acceptance. His work there was quite profitable to his students, and even more profitable to himself. For he was all the while a most thorough and devoted student, making noble use of the treasures opened to him in the college library. Professor George W. Clark, one of the members of the faculty, says of him: "His years in the professorship advanced him even more than any of the students." In these days he was a careful student of Origen, of Calvin, of Jonathan Edwards, and of Lyman Beecher.

In 1839 Professor Simpson was called to the presidency of the Indiana Asbury University at Greencastle, Indiana, and entered upon nine years of arduous and unremitting toil. The financial disaster of 1837 almost wrecked the business of the country, and hung like a pall over the entire community. The university paid its professors in its own scrip, and the scrip was turned into money on the best terms that could be made. But the new president was equal to the emergency. Like Shammah, the son of Agee, "he stood in the midst of the ground and defended it, and the Lord wrought a great victory." "His Sundays were given to preaching throughout the state; long tours were taken on horseback, with a preaching appointment for nearly every day; at the great gatherings and camp meetings he was always a conspicuous figure. In these tours he rapidly developed his extraordinary preaching power; his name became a household word in all the state, and his eloquence was so prized that he was called for from all quarters. The effect of his exertions was that a genuine enthusiasm was created for the university among preachers and people."

He soon became closely identified with all the interests of the denomination throughout Indiana and the entire western country. He was the representative of his conference in the General Conferences of 1844, 1848, and 1852. In 1848 his health began to give way under the heavy strain at Asbury, and he accepted the editorship of the *Western Christian Advocate* at Cincinnati, Ohio. From this time his influence became more distinctly felt throughout the denomination at large, and he was known before long as an able and sagacious leader.

In 1852, at the age of forty-one, Matthew Simpson was elected a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and, without a doubt, was for the next quarter of a century was the most inspiring and dominating personality in the Church. His profound consecration, his rare gift of eloquence, his statesmanship, his enthusiasm, his tireless energy, and his aggressive leadership, marked him out as one of those providential men whom God always keeps in reserve for great eras and emergencies. Immediately after his election to the episcopacy, we find him "on the wing," passing rapidly throughout the borders of the Methodist Zion, with open eye, alert mind and wise suggestion for every need of the Church, thrilling and inspiring all classes by his wonderful eloquence. In 1854 he visited the Pacific coast, "preparing the way of the Lord in the wilderness." In 1856 he wrote with his own hand the commission of William Butler, the first Methodist missionary to India. In 1857 he made a tour of Europe, Egypt, and Palestine. All through the trying ordeal of the Civil War Bishop Simpson was one of the most constant and trusted advisers of President Lincoln. Bishop Thomas Bowman relates the following incident which he witnessed while chaplain of the Senate: "On one occasion, with two or three friends, I was convening with Mr. Lincoln, near the distant window in the Blue Room, when, unexpectedly, the door opened and Bishop Simpson entered. Immediately the president raised both arms and started for the bishop, almost on a run. When he reached him he grasped him with both hands and exclaimed: 'Why, Bishop Simpson, how glad I am to see you!' I afterwards learned that they spent several hours in private, and that the bishop had been especially asked to come to Washington for the interview." It was Bishop Simpson, who, at the request of the family, spoke the last words at the grave of his friend, the martyred president, at Springfield, Illinois.

"It may be safely asserted," says Doctor Crooks, "that for instant and overwhelming effect upon an audience, Bishop Simpson was exceeded by no man of his time in America or England. No matter where, on the Atlantic or the Pacific coast, at home or abroad, speaking directly or through an interpreter, the same accounts of the effects of his preaching are given us." Whether he was preaching to a company of pioneers in the woods of Oregon, or to a conference of Methodist preachers, or to a college gathering, or addressing an assembly in some great hall, the result was the same: soon the audience came under the spell of his magnetic eloquence.

One of the most thrilling of his addresses was that made in 1881, near the close of his life, at the Garfield memorial services in London. Mr. James Russell Lowell, our minister to England, presided and read an appropriate address. Bishop Simpson followed in a spontaneous utterance that voiced the feeling of millions, and quickened the sympathies of two continents. At one point in his address the entire audience rose and gave three prolonged cheers. All this did not seem incongruous, but rather a proper relief for pent-up emotion.

The General Conference met in 1884 at Philadelphia, the city where for many years Bishop Simpson had resided. His health had for several months been failing, and it was feared he would not be able to appear at the Conference at all. He was present, however, more or less during the session, and on Friday, May 28, took leave of it and of active service in a memorable address, most beautiful, hopeful and tender. A few days later, on June 18, he entered into "the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven." A short time before he passed away he was heard to repeat in an undertone the closing lines of a favorite hymn: "And shout and wonder at his grace through all eternity."

The last words upon his lips had been the theme of a joyous life-time ministry: "My Savior! My Savior!"